

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: PSDI CONGRESS

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S CONVENTION AT GENOA THIS WEEK IS EXPECTED TO BREAK NO NEW POLICY GROUND, BUT TO CONCENTRATE UPON PROBLEMS OF INTERNAL PARTY ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT. DEEP ANIMOSITY BETWEEN THE TANASSI-LED MAJORITY AND THE SARAGAT-LED MINORITY COULD PRODUCE CONSIDERABLE INTERNAL BLOOD-LETTING. END SUMMARY.

2. IN GENOA, APRIL 2 THROUGH 6, THE ITALIAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY WILL HOLD ITS SECOND CONGRESS SINCE ITS RE-CREATION FOLLOWING THE 1969 FAILURE OF SOCIALIST UNIFICATION. 620 DELEGATES WILL ATTEND, REPRESENTING A CLAIMED PARTY MEMBERSHIP OF 320,000. ESTIMATES OF FACTION STRENGTH RANGE FROM 58 PERCENT TO 65 PERCENT FOR THE TANASSI-ORLANDI MAJORITY, 10 PERCENT TO 20 PERCENT FOR THE RIGHT-WING PRETI MINORITY (WHICH AT PRESENT IS ALLIED WITH THE MAJORITY), AND 25 PERCENT TO 30 PERCENT FOR THE SARAGAT-LED LEFT OPPOSITION.

3. NO MAJOR SHIFTS OF PSDI POLITICAL DIRECTION APPEAR IN STORE AT THIS CONGRESS, GIVEN THE PRESENT PARTY ADMINISTRATION'S CLEAR NUMERICAL CONTROL OVER THE CONGRESS, AND THE DEARTH OF CONCRETE PHILOSOPHICAL OR PRACTICAL CONTRASTS BETWEEN THAT

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ADMINISTRATION AND THE SARAGAT-LED OPPOSITION. HOWEVER, THE

OPPOSITION HAS ALREADY DECLARED IT WILL CHALLENGE THE PSDI'S CONSTANT "SUBSERVIENT" TO THE DC IN CENTER-LEFT PARLEYS AND WILL SEEK GREATER "DEMOCRATIZATION" OF PARTY STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT, (POSSIBLY TO INCLUDE A SHIFT FROM THE PRESENT MAJORITY SYSTEM TO PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION).

4. DEEP PERSONAL BITTERNESS AND POWER JEALOUSIES GIVE PROMISE OF MUCH ACRIMONY AS CONVENTION DEBATE PROGRESSES. THE SARAGAT-LED OPPOSITION HOLDS NO MINISTRIES IN THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT, ALTHOUGH IT HAD SOUGHT ONE FOR ROMITA. THERE IS ALSO RANCOR OVER THE MAJORITY'S ALLEGED FAILURE TO PROTECT EX-MINISTER OF INDUSTRIES FERRI (A RECENT SARAGAT CONVERT) FROM HAVING BEEN SINGLED OUT (ALONG WITH DC SENATOR VALSECCHI) TO ENDURE FURTHER INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT IN OIL PAYOFF SCANDALS (SEE ROME 3333). UNDERLYING THESE ISSUES IS AN INTENSE PERSONAL ANIMOSITY BETWEEN SARAGAT AND HIS ONE-TIME PROTEGE TANASSI, WHICH ERUPTED TO A NEW HIGH LAST WEEK WHEN TANASSI RESPONDED TO PUBLIC SLURS FROM SARAGAT WITH A STATEMENT EXPRESSING HIS "PITY" FOR THE EX-PRESIDENT WHO HE IMPLIED HAS BECOME MENTALLY UNBALANCED. ALTHOUGH COMPROMISES ON SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES OF PARTY ORGANIZATION MAY BE WORKED OUT, MOST OBSERVERS EXPECT THE PSDI'S WOUNDS TO BE FURTHER SALTED RATHER THAN HEALED AT THIS CONVENTION.

5. OF CONCERN TO BOTH MAJORITY AND MINORITY IS THE MAY 12 DIVORCE REFERENDUM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE POLITICAL EQUILIBRIUM. THERE IS GROWING CONCERN AMONG ALL DEMOCRATIC LAY PARTIES THAT THE REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN AND ITS AFTERMATH MAY SO "POLARIZE" THE POLITICAL SCENE AS TO THRUST THE SMALL DEMOCRATIC LAY PARTIES INTO A SATELLITE RELATIONSHIP WITH A STRENGTHENED DC. THIS FEAR IS SPAWNING RENEWED TALK OF A POSSIBLE EVENTUAL COALESCING OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, REPUBLICANS, LIBERALS AND POSSIBLY SOME SOCIALISTS INTO A "LAY FRONT" WHICH COULD OPERATE AS AN INDEPENDENT THIRD FORCE IN PARTNERSHIP RATHER THAN SUBORDINATION TO THE DC. NO OVERT ACTION TOWARD THE CONSTRUCTION OF SUCH AN ALLIANCE IS LIKELY BY ANY PARTY IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, BUT THE CONCEPT IS LIKELY TO BE DISCUSSED IN THE CORRIDORS IF NOT ON THE FLOOR AT GENOA. DECONTROLLED FOLLOWING APRIL 2, 1978. VOLPE

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